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PRESS RELEASE

**REAL PRINTS: REPRODUCTION OR INVENTION**  
Through May 17, 1987

Since the 19th century, when there was a resurgence of interest in creative printmaking and originality became important to collectors, the print that reproduces another work of art has been considered inferior to the print that is an original creation. The exhibition **Real Prints: Reproduction or Invention** shows that distinctions between the two types of prints are not always so easily made, and that the quality of a print, whether an original design or a reproduction, is determined primarily by the sensitivity and imagination of the printmaker.

The more than eighty works in the exhibition--original inventions as well as reproductions of paintings and drawings by old and modern masters dating from the 15th through the 20th centuries--were drawn from the Museum's print collections. Included are prints by Andrea Mantegna, Marcantonio Raimondi, Martin Schongauer, Agostino Carracci, Rembrandt, Jean Honoré Fragonard, Francisco Goya, Edouard Manet, George Grosz, and Robert Rauschenberg. The exhibition will be on view in the Museum's prints and drawings galleries through May 17, 1987.

From the 15th century, when the first prints were made, until the 19th century, when modern methods of photoreproduction were developed, the compositions of major artists were disseminated through the medium of reproductive prints. The Italian master Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506) became famous throughout Europe through his original engravings, such as Battle of

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the Sea Gods, in this exhibition, and through the engraved reproductions of his works by other artists. The engravings after his Soldiers Carrying Trophies and Hercules and Antaeus reproduce drawings by Mantegna that are now lost and would be unknown to us but for the prints. The virtuoso Italian printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi (ca. 1475/80 - ca. 1530) devoted himself almost entirely to reproducing the works of other masters. Several of his finest engravings, such as Massacre of the Innocents, reproduce the drawings of Raphael, but the charming engraving of Orpheus Seated is his own invention.

The successful reproductive print is one that retains the image from the original but transforms it to accommodate the inherent qualities of a different medium. The woodcuts of the 17th-century Flemish artist Christoffel Jegher translate colorful paintings by Rubens into bold, arresting black and white compositions that are compelling works of art on their own terms. On the other hand, Rembrandt's only attempt to reproduce one of his paintings, an etching and engraving of Christ Before Pilate, shows the loss of spontaneity that has tarnished the reputation of reproductive prints. This reproduction seems lifeless when compared with Rembrandt's expressive original etching of The Return of the Prodigal Son or a lively etching after his painting of Lot and His Daughters by the 17th-century Dutch artist Jan Joris van Vliet.

New print processes developed during the 18th and 19th centuries, such as mezzotint, aquatint, and lithography, enabled printmakers to imitate the effects of drawings and the tonal qualities of paintings. Auguste Clot's lithographs of 1899-1900 after drawings by Auguste Rodin imitate their models so well that they have sometimes been mistaken for the original drawings. The

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invention of photography in the 19th century gradually displaced or changed the role of the reproductive print, but it also gave the innovative printmaker some new processes. The prints of 20th-century artists George Grosz, Georges Rouault, and Robert Rauschenberg, although original compositions, are produced by photomechanical means.

**Real Prints: Reproduction or Invention** was conceived and organized by Louise S. Richards, who recently retired as chief curator of prints and drawings at The Cleveland Museum of Art.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.